

[Review of] The Correspondence of John Lothrop Motley

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predecessors. The late Emperor of Germany and our own Prince of Wales stand out among most Royal personages of the present generation for their anxiety to deserve well of their countrymen, and for their earnest efforts to fulfil every requirement incidental to their stations. The path of duty was very different in both cases, but in both it was conscientiously followed out. It would be almost miraculous if any one occupying a foremost position in any country entirely escaped the voice of detraction; but, in justice to the good sense and good feeling of the English people, it must be acknowledged that this unwelcome voice is almost wholly silent where the Prince of Wales is concerned. Few, indeed, are they who will not cordially and frankly acknowledge that his personal qualities, and his lofty sense of duty, well entitle him to share with his illustrious mother, the Sovereign, the loyalty and affection of the British people all over the world.

Quarterly

April 1889

A review of

ART. II. — 1. *The Correspondence of John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., formerly United States Minister in England; Author of 'Rise of the Dutch Republic,' 'History of the United Netherlands,' &c.* Edited by George William Curtis. 2 vols. London, 1889.

2. *John Lothrop Motley, a Memoir.* By Oliver Wendell Holmes. London, 1878.

**A**MONG the many Americans and foreigners who, in recent years, have undertaken to describe England, her customs, and her inhabitants, there are but few who have enjoyed such opportunities as did Mr. Motley of mixing with and studying the inner life of our best society; and never perhaps have such opportunities been combined with that genius of observation and faculty for description, which were possessed by the historian of the Dutch Republic. They are but sketches that he gives us, but sketches which comprise most of the leading characters of the time, dashed off from day to day in all the ease and unrestraint of his familiar correspondence, and instinct with the natural humour and genial, if somewhat cynical, wit of the man.

We have mentioned at the outset these outline sketches of London society, not because they form the largest or most important portion of the Correspondence, but because it is to them that many of our readers will turn with the greatest eagerness. There is scarcely a capital in Europe with which Mr. Motley was not familiar: his diplomatic duties or his literary

researches had, at one time or another, entailed residence at St. Petersburg and Vienna, at the Hague, Brussels, Berlin, and Rome. To the accounts of these are added descriptions of the best circles in Boston and Washington, both from his own pen and those of such correspondents as Oliver Wendell Holmes and James Russell Lowell; each interesting in no ordinary degree, but especially interesting to the insular mind of the Englishman as the background, and, if we may be allowed the expression, the foil to that more extended picture of London society of which he wrote:—

‘I cannot help forming a favourable idea of English civilisation when I see the position accorded in this country to those who cultivate art, science, and literature, as if those things were worth something, and were entitled to some consideration, as well as high birth, official rank, and wealth, which on the Continent are the only passports.’

Partly, perhaps, owing to a want of sympathy with the French and their existing form of Government, partly to an intense dislike and distrust of her ruler, of whom he never speaks save in terms of reprobation, Mr. Motley did not share that love of Paris which is a proverbial attribute of his countrymen.

‘Upon leaving Switzerland,’ he writes to his mother in 1855, ‘we passed a month in Paris. I don’t like to say much about that episode in our history, because the immense fatigue and expense of passing four weeks in that place so entirely counter-balances all satisfaction which can be derived from it, that I cannot speak upon the subject without injustice and exaggeration.’ And three years later: ‘The influences of Paris are very depressing to me. I dislike the place more and more every time I come to it.’

Scarce twelve years have passed since he was moving about in London society, and yet in turning over the leaves of these volumes it is sad to reflect, how few of his intimate personal associates are still remaining among us. Those who had the privilege of his acquaintance will not readily forget the aristocratic air, the singularly handsome features, the cultured, if somewhat sarcastic wit, for which he was remarkable: those who knew him more intimately could not fail to be impressed with his deep sincerity and sympathy, but to the world at large he is now little more than a name. ‘An author may interest his public by his work, or by his personality, or by both,’ writes the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table: Motley, the historian, is known, and will be known, wherever the English language is spoken or read; of Motley, the man, but a vague and indefinite impression exists.

It is true that a memoir of him has been written by his friend, Oliver Wendell Holmes, but it is not so widely known in this country as it deserves to be, nor is it such a work as would, apart from any previous interest in its subject, appeal to the general reader: it is addressed rather to Motley's friends and enemies—for he had enemies—than to the world at large. Moreover, the work is in the main an *apologia pro vitâ ejus*: his resignation of his post at Vienna in 1867; his recal from London in 1870; the attack on his religious opinions, his 'unitarianism' and 'rationalism,' by Mr. Groen van Prinsterer, are all dealt with at considerable length, and give the book, intentionally perhaps, a polemical character.

The two volumes before us contain merely a selection from his correspondence chiefly with the members of his own family and his intimate friends: the editorial notes are few and far between, and where gaps in the series, extending at times over two or three years, render a connecting link necessary, it is confined to the briefest possible narration of facts.

In short, Mr. Motley's life can best be read and studied between the lines of his own correspondence, and we are confident that it is a study which will repay him who undertakes it. His career was passed among some of the most stirring events and most prominent characters of the present century, but was of itself devoid of any striking external incidents: it was, moreover, full of contrarities, and it is in a great measure to them that we owe these charming volumes. Deeply attached to the members of his own family, he was, by the exigencies of his profession, separated, sometimes for long periods, from them: American to the backbone, and a thoroughgoing hater of monarchy, he was compelled to pass the best years of his life at European courts, and amidst European aristocracies: passionately attached to the cause of the North, he resided in England at a time when English sympathies were strongly drawn towards the Confederate cause: a devoted adherent of the Republican party, he was by two successive Republican presidents treated in a manner which wounded his sensitive nature to the quick, and contributed not a little to his early death.

Amid such conflicting circumstances his natural genius was sharpened, and, to his credit be it said, the chastening which he underwent seems in the end to have strengthened the nobler qualities of his nature, and to have softened the rigid character of his political creed.

John Lothrop Motley was born at Dorchester, now a suburb of Boston, on April 15, 1814. His father, Thomas Motley, a man of no little ability, was the author of some of the once

celebrated 'Major Downing's Letters,' and his mother, Anna Lothrop, was a descendant of the Checkley or Chichele family, so famous in the annals of Oxford University. When the author of the 'Rise of the Dutch Republic' went to Oxford in 1860 to receive his D.C.L. degree, he wrote to his mother:—

'I was sorry that on the Commemoration Day we lunched in University Hall rather than in All Souls', where we were also expected, because All Souls' was founded by Archbishop Chicheley, in the reign of Henry VI., of a Northampton family, of which your grandfather Checkley was no doubt descended. Until very recently, any one proving kindred with the old archbishop might claim free instruction at his college, so that I might have been educated at All Souls' at small expense, but the privilege is now done away with.'

Mr. and Mrs. Motley had the reputation of being the handsomest couple in Boston; and his mother, to whom he was devotedly attached, and to whom a large part of the best letters in this collection is addressed, is described by Mr. Holmes as

'a woman who could not be looked upon without admiration. I well remember the sweet dignity of her aspect, her "regal beauty," as Mr. Phillips truly styles it, and the charm of her serene and noble presence, which made her the type of a perfect motherhood. Her character corresponded to the promise of her gracious aspect. She was one of the fondest of mothers, but not thoughtlessly indulgent to the boy from whom she hoped and expected more than she thought it wise to let him know.'

At the age of ten years he was sent to a school at Jamaica Plain, near Boston, kept by a Mr. C. W. Greene, but within a year he was transferred to the Round Hill School at Northampton, Mass., an establishment which at that time had attained success and popularity under the management of Mr. Joseph S. Cogswell and Mr. George Bancroft, the future historian of the United States. We are told that Motley went thither with a considerable reputation, especially as a declaimer, and Shakespeare, Scott, and Cooper would appear to have been among his favourite authors.

'I did wonder,' said Mr. Wendell Phillips, 'at the diligence and painstaking, the drudgery shown in his historical works. In early life he had no industry, not needing it. All he cared for in a book he caught quickly—the spirit of it—and all his mind needed or would use. This quickness of apprehension was marvellous.'

His great aptitude for learning languages had also exhibited itself at an early age. His want of industry led to his temporary rustication while at Harvard, but on his return  
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thither he appears to have amended his ways, and to have ended his university career creditably, if not with the highest honours.

Having graduated at Harvard at the early age of eighteen, young Motley proceeded in 1831 to complete his education in Germany, and at this point commences that series of descriptive letters to his parents which continues to his mother's death in 1865, and forms, so to speak, the backbone of the series. Arrived at Göttingen, he was forthwith enrolled on the books of the University, and set himself in earnest to study the German language, in which he attained such proficiency that in after years he was asked by the Emperor of Austria whether he were not a German.

In his letters home he describes in all their eccentricities the manners and customs of the German students; mentions the names of his English and American companions and friends; describes his holiday rambles and his legal studies; but we look in vain for any allusion to the origin and growth of an acquaintance with a fellow student, formed during those years, which was already ripening into a lifelong friendship with one of Germany's greatest men.

'I never pass by old Logier's House, in the Friedrichstrasse,' wrote Bismarck in 1863, 'without looking up at the windows that used to be ornamented by a pair of red slippers sustained on the wall by the feet of a gentleman sitting in the Yankee way, his head below and out of sight. I then gratify my memory with remembrance of "good old colony times when we were roguish chaps."'\*

It is difficult to realize that the following epistle was addressed by the Prussian Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Minister of the United States at the Court of Vienna:—

'Berlin, May 23rd, 1864.

'JACK MY DEAR,—Where the devil are you, and what do you do that you never write a line to me? I am working from morn to night like a nigger, and you have nothing to do at all—you might as well tip me a line as well as looking on your feet tilted against the wall of God knows what a dreary colour. I cannot entertain a regular correspondence; it happens to me that during five days I do not find a quarter of an hour for a walk; but you, lazy old chap, what keeps you from thinking of your old friends? When just going to bed in this moment my eye met with yours on your portrait, and I curtailed the sweet restorer, sleep, in order to remind you of Auld Lang Syne. Why do you never come to Berlin? It is not a

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\* In 1888, Prince Bismarck, in his great speech to the German Reichsrath, quoted this song, adding at the same time that he had learnt it from his 'dear deceased friend, John Motley.'



quarter of an American's holiday journey from Vienna, and my wife and me should be so happy to see you once more in this sullen life. When can you come, and when will you? I swear that I will make out the time to look with you on old Logier's quarters, and drink a bottle with you at Gerolt's, where they once would not allow you to put your slender legs upon a chair. Let politics be hanged and come to see me. I promise that the Union Jack shall wave over our house, and conversation and the best old hock shall pour damnation upon the rebels. Do not forget old friends, neither their wives, as mine wishes nearly as ardently as myself to see you, or at least to see as quickly as possible a word of your handwriting.

‘Sei gut und komm oder schreibe.

‘Dein, V. BISMARCK.

‘Haunted by the old song, “In good old Colony Times.”’

Though Motley's letters, however, are silent on this point, the want is in great measure supplied by Prince Bismarck himself, for in 1878, in answer to an appeal from Dr. Holmes, he wrote :—

‘I met Motley at Göttingen in 1832, I am not sure if at the beginning of the Easter term or Michaelmas term. He kept company with German students, though more addicted to study than we members of the fighting clubs. Although not having mastered yet the German language he exercised a marked attraction by a conversation sparkling with wit, humour, and originality. In autumn of 1833, having both of us emigrated from Göttingen to Berlin for the prosecution of our studies, we became fellow lodgers in the house No. 161, Friedrich Strasse. There we lived in the closest intimacy, sharing meals and outdoor exercise. Motley by that time had arrived at talking German fluently: he occupied himself not only in translating Goethe's poem, “Faust,” but tried his hand even in composing German verses. Enthusiastic admirer of Shakespeare, Byron, Goethe, he used to spice his conversation abundantly with quotations from these his favourite authors. A pertinacious arguer, so much so that sometimes he watched my awakening in order to continue a discussion on some topic of science, poetry, or practical life cut short by the chime of the small hours, he never lost his mild and amiable temper. . . . The most striking feature of his handsome and delicate appearance was uncommonly large and beautiful eyes. He never entered a drawing-room without exciting the curiosity and sympathy of the ladies.’

Having completed his studies at Göttingen and Berlin, which included a course of lectures on law from Savigny, Motley, then in his twenty-first year, set off on a twelvemonth's journey in Europe, principally in Austria, Italy, and Sicily: that the past two years of work had not been in vain is proved by his letters, which



which begin to show increasing signs of that picturesque vigour which is so marked a feature in his more mature writings. The comments of a youth of twenty-one on his first journey along the beaten track of European travel are not wont to bear the light of publication half a century later; but whether he is describing his ascent of Etna,\* or calling up the ghosts of old scenes and characters among the ruins of Hadrian's Villa, or pondering over the Apollo Belvedere and the Aurora in Rome, his reflections display an originality and a sympathetic insight uncommon in so young a man.

In the summer of 1835 Motley returned to Boston, with the intention of practising as a lawyer, and here occurs the first hiatus in the correspondence, for in the next letter we find him, in 1841, leaving his wife and family to take up his duties as Secretary of Legation at St. Petersburg,\*but Dr. Holmes enables us to supply the deficiency. In 1837 he was married to Mary Benjamin, of whom

'those who remember her find it hard to speak in the common terms of praise which they award to the good and lovely. She was not only handsome, amiable, and agreeable, but there was a cordial frankness, an open-hearted sincerity about her which made her seem like a sister to those who could help becoming her lovers.'

How happy a marriage this proved to be is testified on almost every page of the subsequent correspondence; how terrible a blow to Motley was her death is shown by his touching letter to Dr. Holmes, written a few months after that event.

The other leading episode in these years was the publication of Motley's first novel, 'Morton's Hope.' The book was a failure, and is now only interesting from the fact, that—like many another book written at a time when the influence of Byron, reflected by Benjamin Disraeli, was strongly at work—it contains much that is of an autobiographical character. That it was a failure is admitted by the author, who in 1861 wrote:—

'Then I knew how hard it was to write a novel. *Haud inexpertus loquor*. Did I not have two novels killed under me (as Balzac phrases it) before I found that my place was among the sappers and miners and not the lancers?'

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\* The effect produced on his mind by the famous shadow of the mountain is shown by a passage in the 'Dutch Republic,' Part I., ch. iii.;—'As across the bright plains of Sicily when the sun is rising, the vast pyramidal shadow of Mount Etna is definitely and visibly projected—the phantom of that ever-present enemy which holds fire and devastation in its bosom—so in the morning hour of Philip's reign the shadow of the Inquisition was cast from afar across those warm and smiling provinces, a spectre menacing fiercer flames and wider desolation than those which mere physical agencies could ever compass.'

To return to the correspondence, we find Motley in the autumn of 1841 on his way to take up his appointment at the Court of the Czar: he arrived at his post in the early part of November, but it is evident from the first that his position was uncongenial to him; his office he describes as a sinecure; he was out of sympathy with Russian society, 'which,' he writes, 'is very showy and gay, but entirely hollow, and anything but intellectual.' 'You have no idea,' he adds later on, 'of the absolute and dreary solitude in which I live,' and before three months had elapsed he had thrown up his appointment, and quitted for ever a country of which he wrote:—

'Peter the Great alone raised Russia out of the quagmire of barbarism, just as he raised St. Petersburg out of the morass; but it seems to me that just as this city may at any moment, by six hours too long continuance of a south-west wind, be inundated and swamped for ever, so may Russia at any moment, through a succession of half-a-dozen bad Czars, be submerged in its original barbarism.'

In the brief period of his residence at St. Petersburg, Motley found occasion to send home to his family some graphic accounts of the Russian Court and society:—

'The Czar is deserving of all the praise I have heard of him. He is one of the handsomest men I ever saw, six feet three inches at least in height, and "every inch a king." His figure is robust, erect and stately, and his features are of great symmetry, and his forehead and eye are singularly fine.

"The front of Jove himself,  
An eye like Mars to threaten and command."

In short he is a regular-built Jupiter.'

In describing a ball in the 'Salle Blanche' of the Imperial palace, he dwells upon the sumptuous magnificence of the scene.

'The floor of the ball was thronged with dignitaries glittering like goldfinches and chattering like magpies. The most picturesque figures were the officers from the various Asiatic provinces of Russia and from the regions of "frosty Caucasus." The Circassians with their keen eyes, black beards and white caftans, showed their purer descent from the original stock of the European race, and were well contrasted with the Cossack officers, some of whom looked as if they might have served in Attila's army.'

Motley did not immediately return to America, but spent some months travelling about on the Continent, visiting Mme. de Goethe at Weimar, and finally passing a few weeks in Paris, where he attended a meeting of the Chamber of Deputies.

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Of the speakers he there heard he formed but a low opinion, M. Thiers alone deserving the name of an orator, although his delivery would be more correctly described as squeaking than speaking—

‘and yet in spite of his funny voice, every word that he said was distinctly audible, and his style was so fluent, so limpid, and so logical, his manners so assured and self-possessed, that, in spite of the disadvantages of his voice, his figure, and his great round spectacles, which give him the appearance of a small screech owl, I thought him one of the most agreeable speakers I had ever heard. The Chamber is evidently afraid of him without respecting him, and his consummate brass, added to his ready wit, makes every one of his speeches gall and wormwood to his enemies.’

From the summer of 1842, when Motley returned home, there occurs another gap in the correspondence down to 1851. In the interval he took some part in politics. Already those forces which ten years later were to burst forth in one of the greatest social conflagrations the world has ever seen, were beginning to make themselves felt, and Motley actively supported the candidature of Clay for the Presidency: Polk's success was a bitter disappointment to him, and though seven years later he served for a time in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, he does not appear to have had any serious desire to take an active part in American political life.

These years were in fact the most important in his life, for they formed the turning-point of his career. Home politics were, as we have seen, not to his taste; the legal profession, for which he had been trained, never appears to have engaged his serious attention; his first efforts in diplomacy had ended in disappointment; his attempts at fiction had been a failure, for his second novel, ‘Merry Mount,’ though not published till 1849, was probably written some years previously; but another form of literature was beginning to absorb his mind.

The character and career of the ‘sagacious despot,’ the ‘Scandinavian wizard’ who, though ‘addicted to drinking, murdering his son, beating his Prime Minister, and a few other foibles, was still a wonderful man,’ seems to have been the one thing which aroused the interest of the young diplomatist during his residence in St. Petersburg; and in October, 1845, there appeared in the ‘North American Review’ an historical essay on Peter the Great, ‘a narrative rather than a criticism, a rapid, continuous, brilliant, almost dramatic narrative,’ which gave to the world a foretaste of the remarkable power of vivid portraiture which was subsequently to render the name of Motley famous.

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In 1847 Mr. Prescott's fame was at its zenith : his two great histories of 'Ferdinand and Isabella,' and of the 'Conquest of Mexico,' had in that year been succeeded by his history of the 'Conquest of Peru.' It was a bold step for a young and almost unknown writer to enter the field occupied by one whose reputation was so firmly and widely established, but this Motley dared to do. Captivated apparently by the analogy which he saw between William of Orange and George Washington, he dared to take up the threads of Spanish history where his master had for the time left them, and to transfer the scene from the little known new world to the familiar ground of the old.

Even before the appearance of the 'Conquest of Peru,' Motley had made some general studies in reference to the subject, without being aware that Prescott had the intention of continuing his work. On receiving intimation of that fact,

'My first thought was, inevitably as it were, only of myself. It seemed to me that I had nothing to do but to abandon at once a cherished dream, and probably to renounce authorship. For I had not first made up my mind to write a history and then cast about to take up a subject. My subject had taken me up, drawn me on, and absorbed me into itself. It was necessary for me, it seemed, to write the book I had been thinking much of, even if it were destined to fall dead from the press, and I had no inclination or interest to write any other. When I had made up my mind accordingly, it then occurred to me that Prescott might not be pleased that I should come forward upon his ground. It is true that no announcement of his intentions had been made, and that he had not, I believe, even commenced his preliminary studies for Philip. At the same time I thought it would be disloyal on my part not to go to him at once, confer with him on the subject, and if I should find a shadow of dissatisfaction on his mind at my proposition, to abandon my plan altogether.

'I had only the slightest acquaintance with him at that time. I was comparatively a young man, and certainly not entitled on any ground to more than the common courtesy which Prescott never could refuse to anyone. But he received me with such a frank and ready and liberal sympathy, and such an open-hearted, guileless expansiveness, that I felt a personal affection for him from that hour. I remember the interview as if it had taken place yesterday. It was in his father's house, in his own library, looking on the garden-house and garden—honoured father and illustrious son—alas ! all numbered with the things that were.

'He assured me that he had not the slightest objection whatever to my plan, that he wished me every success, and that if there were any books in his library bearing on my subject that I liked to use they were entirely at my service.

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'Had the result of that [interview] been different—had he distinctly stated, or even vaguely hinted, that it would be as well if I should select some other topic, or had he only sprinkled me with the cold water of conventional and commonplace encouragement, I should have gone from him with a chill upon my mind, and no doubt have laid down the pen at once; for as I have already said, it was not that I cared about writing a history, but that I felt an inevitable impulse to write *one particular history*.'

Fortified by this encouragement, Motley set himself to write his history, but after some two or three years of work in America, he discovered that it was hopeless to attempt the task apart from the original authorities. There was no help for it, the inevitable impulse was upon him, and he boldly determined to abandon what he had done, to transplant his home to Europe, and to seek materials for his great work at the fountain-head.

In the summer of 1851 we once more take up the correspondence to find Motley and his family arriving in Europe, and seeking a residence convenient for the prosecution of his labours.

It is interesting to note his first impressions of that country to which he was destined to render such signal service.

'Holland,' he writes to his mother, 'is a stranger and more wonderful country than I had imagined. I did not think that you would so plainly observe how it has been scooped out of the bottom of the sea. But when travelling there you see how the never-ending, still-beginning duel, which this people has so long been waging with the ocean, remains still their natural condition, and the only means by which their physical existence as a nation can be protracted a year. They are always below high-water mark, and the ocean is only kept out by the most prodigious system of dykes and pumps which the heart of man ever conceived. It is like a leaking ship at sea after a tempest, the people are pumping night and day for their lives.'

The winter was spent in Dresden; Motley, working ten hours a day, likens his toil to that of a miner, smashing quartz with a sledge hammer, and digging raw material from the subterranean depths of black-letter folios in half-a-dozen different languages, ignorant the while whether his spoil, on being sifted, would yield pure ore, or only dross.

'But I confess that I have not been working under ground for so long without hoping that I may make some few people in the world wiser and better by my labour. This must be the case whenever a man honestly "seeks the truths in ages past" to furnish light for the present and future track. And if you only get enough oil to feed

feed a very small lamp it is better than nothing. A little lantern may help you to find an honest man or so in the dark corridor of history; but not if you look for them in the spirit of Diogenes. It is always much harder to find commendable than accusable characters in the world, partly, perhaps, because the world likes better to censure than to commend. I flatter myself that I have found one great, virtuous and heroic character, William the First of Orange, founder of the Dutch Republic. This man, who did the work of a thousand men every year of his life, who was never inspired by any personal ambition, but who performed good and lofty actions because he was born to do them, just as other men have been born to do nasty ones, deserves to be better understood than I believe him to have been by the world at large. He is one of the very few men who have a right to be mentioned in the same page with Washington.'

The following winter found him still hard at work, oscillating between the Hague—that mild, stagnant, elegant, drowsy, tranquil, clean, umbrageous little capital, smothered in foliage, buried in an ancient forest with the downs thrown up by the North Sea surging all round it, and the ocean rolling beyond,—and Brussels especially endeared to him as the theatre of so many deep tragedies, so many stately dramas, even so many farces, with which he was familiar. Of this city he draws a memorable and vivid picture, too long for insertion here, in which he dwells on the contrast between the upper quarter—with its brocaded Hôtel de Ville, and spire embroidered with the delicacy of needlework, sugar-work, spider-work, or what you will—and the squalor of the lower town. 'Thus you see,' he adds, 'that our Cybele sits with her head crowned with very stately towers, and her feet in a tub of very dirty water.'

At length, in May, 1854, Motley betook himself to London, the precious MS.—that is to say, the portion of it which stops at the year 1584, with the death of the Prince of Orange—in his hand, and in search of a publisher. In this he was destined, like many a distinguished predecessor, to undergo some disappointment, but in the end the book was issued in the spring of 1856, and met with such immediate success that 17,000 copies were sold in England during the first year of publication. While the sheets were passing through the press, Motley paid a visit to his old college companion, Otto von Bismarck, who was then chief of the Prussian Legation at Frankfort, and whom he had not met since their college days.

'When I called, Bismarck was at dinner, so I left my card, and said I would come back in half an hour. As soon as my card had been carried to him (as I learned afterwards) he sent a servant after  
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me to the hotel, but I had gone another way. When I came back I was received with open arms. I can't express to you how cordially he received me. If I had been his brother, instead of an old friend, he could not have shown more warmth and affectionate delight in seeing me. I find I like him even better than I thought I did, and you know how high an opinion I always expressed of his talents and disposition. He is a man of very noble character, and of very great powers of mind. The prominent place which he now occupies as a statesman sought *him*. He did not seek it, or any other office. The stand which he took in the Assembly from conviction, on the occasion of the outbreak of 1848, marked him at once to all parties as one of the leading characters of Prussia. Of course I don't now go into the rights and wrongs of the matter, but I listened with great interest, as you may suppose, to his detailed history of the revolutionary events of that year, and his share in them, which he narrated to me in a long conversation which we had last night.

'In the summer of 1851, he told me that the Minister, Manteuffel, asked him one day abruptly, if he would accept the post of Ambassador at Frankfort, to which (although the proposition was as unexpected a one to him as if I should hear by the next mail that I had been chosen Governor of Massachusetts) he answered, after a moment's deliberation, yes, without another word. The King, the same day, sent for him, and asked him if he would accept the place, to which he made the same brief answer, "Ja." His Majesty expressed a little surprise that he made no inquiries or conditions, when Bismarck replied that anything which the King felt strong enough to propose to him, he felt strong enough to accept. I only write these details that you may have an idea of the man. Strict integrity and courage of character, a high sense of honour, a firm religious belief, united with remarkable talents, make up necessarily a combination which cannot be found any day in any Court; and I have no doubt that he is destined to be Prime Minister, unless his obstinate truthfulness, which is apt to be a stumbling-block for politicians, stands in his way. . . .

'Well, he accepted the post and wrote to his wife next day, who was preparing for a summer's residence in a small house they had taken on the sea coast, that he could not come because he was already established in Frankfort as Minister. The result, he said, was three days of tears on her part. He had previously been leading the life of a plain country squire with a moderate income, had never held any position in the Government or in diplomacy, and had hardly ever been to Court. He went into the office with a holy horror of the mysterious nothings of diplomacy, but soon found how little there was in the whole "*galimatias*." Of course my politics are very different from his, although not so antipodal as you might suppose, but I can talk with him as frankly as I could with you, and I am glad of an opportunity of hearing the other side put by a man whose talents and character I esteem, and who knows so well *le dessous des cartes*.'

It



It would be out of place on the present occasion to enter into any discussion of the 'History;' it has already been reviewed in these pages, and its niche in the Temple of Fame is too well known to require any further indication. Suffice it to say, that Motley did not long remain idle; after a few months spent in a journey to Italy, and a short visit to Boston, he returned to his labours among the archives in London and in Holland. 'I am almost distraught,' he wrote to O. W. Holmes, 'at the circumlocution and circumvolutions of London. Sisyphus with his rock was an idle, loafing individual, compared to the martyr who is doomed to work up the precipice of English routine.' In truth, the work on which he was engaged was a task of no ordinary magnitude; after the death of William the Silent, the history of Holland merges itself in the history of Europe, and of that mighty war of religion which convulsed the civilized world, and did not terminate till the peace of Westphalia. This was the goal which Motley had in view, but which he was destined never to reach, and it must ever be a source of regret that we have not his portraits of Gustavus Adolphus and Wallenstein to place beside those of William of Orange, of John of Barneveld, and of Maurice of Nassau.

The 'History of the United Netherlands' was now taxing all his energies.

'I have much to do in the subterranean way in Brussels, the Hague, London, and Paris. I do not write at all as yet, but I am diving deep and staying under very long, but hoping not to come up too dry. My task is a very large and hard one. My canvas is very broad, and the massing and the composition of the picture will give me more trouble than the more compact one which I have already painted. Then I have not got a grand central heroic figure, like William the Silent, to give unity and flesh and blood interest to the scene. The history will, I fear, be duller and less dramatic than the other. Nevertheless, there are many grand events and striking characters, if I can do justice to them. If I could write half a dozen volumes, with a cheerful confidence that people would read them as easily as I write them, my task would be a comparatively easy one. But I do not know where all the books are to go that are written nowadays. And then my publishers have failed, and Heaven knows what may be the condition of the market when I take my next pigs there. In short, I cannot write at all, except by entirely forgetting for the time that there is such a thing as printing and publishing.'

In the early summer of 1858, Motley, leaving his wife and daughters at Nice, came to London, no longer an obscure toiler among archives, dependent on his letters of introduction for acquaintances, but an author of the first rank, and as such to find

find flung open to him all doors of that society in which 'every illustration from the world of science, art, letters, politics and finance mingle in full proportions with the patriicians, and on equal terms.' His natural diffidence and the sense of loneliness which all men feel on entering a new society soon wore off, and in the course of a few weeks he had become attached to many of the leaders of the London world by ties of friendship and intimacy which lasted to the end of his life.

He was at this time forty-three years of age, of singularly aristocratic appearance. Lady Byron, who is frequently mentioned in these pages, detected in him a strong likeness to her husband. Though by nature an impulsive man, he was reserved in manner, but in congenial society he was a brilliant conversationalist; in politics he was an extreme Liberal, such as in England would be termed a Radical, and he associated himself chiefly with members of the Liberal party, but he regarded a Radical in the literal sense of the name, as a man 'whose trade is dangerous to society.' He was a keen partizan, but his partizanship arose rather from an intense belief in principles than from any narrow-minded adherence to political parties or petty details.

During the war, this quality of his mind was exaggerated almost to a bitter intolerance of anything which was associated, or any one who sympathized with, the cause of the South. In that great constitutional convulsion, he could discern nothing but the deadly struggle between the advocates and the opponents of slavery; all the minor issues, which at the time blurred the vision even of his own countrymen, were to him as nothing in view of 'the great national disgrace of slavery.' It will be seen, later on, that the divergence of opinion between himself and his own father, on this point, was so great as to form a barrier in their familiar intercourse. But no point in his character is more evident, in every page of his correspondence, than his strong affection and power of sympathy. 'Though so oppressed by a constitutional melancholy, which grows upon me very rapidly, as to be almost incapacitated from making myself agreeable,' we find even at times when his inmost feelings were stirred, and in the letters where he gives most strong expression to those feelings, some touch of playful humour or some grotesque allusion, which shows how near the surface was his kindlier and gentler disposition.

His letters to his wife during the months of May, June, and July, 1858, are a sparkling comment on London society; to summarize them would be impossible, we can but give a few extracts taken almost at random from this brilliant panorama.

Before

Before he had made Thackeray's acquaintance his heart had warmed to him in consequence of some words of his, overheard at a dinner party, in high commendation of the 'Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.' Appreciation of his friend's work was a sure passport to Motley's regard:—

'I believe you have never seen Thackeray. He has the appearance of a colossal infant, smooth, white, shiny, ringlety hair, flaxen, alas, with advancing years, a roundish face, with a little dab of a nose upon which it is a perpetual wonder how he keeps his spectacles, a sweet but rather piping voice, with something of the childish treble about it, and a very tall, slightly stooping figure—such are the characteristics of the great "snob" of England. His manner is like that of everybody else in England—nothing original, all planed down into perfect uniformity with that of his fellow-creatures. There was not much more distinction in his talk than in his white choker or black coat and waistcoat. As you like detail, however, I shall endeavour to Boswellize him a little, but it is very hard work. Something was said of Carlyle the author. Thackeray said, "Carlyle hates everybody that has arrived—if they are on the road, he may perhaps treat them civilly." Mackintosh praised the description in the "French Revolution" of the flight of the King and Queen (which is certainly one of the most living pictures ever painted with ink), and Thackeray agreed with him, and spoke of the passages very heartily. Of the Cosmopolitan Club, Thackeray said, "Everybody is or is supposed to be a celebrity; nobody ever says anything worth hearing; and every one goes there with his white choker at midnight, to appear as if he had just been dining with the aristocracy. I have no doubt," he added, "that half of us put on the white cravat after a solitary dinner at home or at our club, and so go down among the Cosmopolitans."'

A few days later he 'called at the Russells,' an event worthy of notice simply from the fact, that he then first made the acquaintance of a lady renowned and beloved in English and foreign societies, who was soon to become one of his best friends and most constant correspondents, Lady William Russell.

In 1856, Macaulay had been compelled by failing health to abandon his seat for Edinburgh, and in the following year he had been raised to the peerage 'with,' as he himself has told us, 'I think as general approbation as I remember in the case of any man that in my time has been made a peer.' In the following account we can trace the inroads which his bodily ailments were making on his health and spirits in 1858.

'His general appearance is singularly commonplace. I cannot describe him better than by saying he has exactly that kind of face and figure which by no possibility would be selected, out  
of

of even a very small number of persons, as those of a remarkable personage. He is of the middle height, neither above nor below it. The outline of his face in profile is rather good. The nose, very slightly aquiline, is well cut, and the expression of the mouth and chin agreeable. His hair is thin and silvery, and he looks a good deal older than many men of his years—for, if I am not mistaken, he is just as old as his century, like Cromwell, Balzac, Charles V., and other notorious individuals. Now those two impostors, so far as appearances go, Prescott and Mignet, who are sixty-two, look young enough, in comparison, to be Macaulay's sons. The face, to resume my description, seen in front, is blank, and as it were badly lighted. There is nothing luminous in the eye, nothing impressive in the brow. The forehead is spacious, but it is scooped entirely away in the region where benevolence ought to be, while beyond rise reverence, firmness and self-esteem, like Alps on Alps. The under eyelids are so swollen as almost to close the eyes, and it would be quite impossible to tell the colour of those orbs, and equally so, from the neutral tint of his hair and face, to say of what complexion he had originally been. His voice is agreeable, and its intonations delightful, although that is so common a gift with Englishmen as to be almost a national characteristic.

'As usual, he took up the ribands of the conversation, and kept them in his own hand, driving wherever it suited him. I believe he is thought by many people a bore, and you remember that Sydney Smith spoke of him as "our Tom, the greatest engine of social oppression in England." I should think he might be to those who wanted to talk also. I can imagine no better fun than to have Carlyle and himself meet accidentally at the same dinner-table with a small company. It would be like two locomotives, each with a long train, coming against each other at express speed. Both, I have no doubt, could be smashed into silence at the first collision. Macaulay, however, is not so dogmatic, or so outrageously absurd as Carlyle often is, neither is he half so grotesque or amusing. His whole manner has the smoothness and polished surface of the man of the world, the politician, and the new peer, spread over the man of letters within. I do not know that I can repeat any of his conversation, for there was nothing to excite very particular attention in its even flow. There was not a touch of Holmes's ever bubbling wit, imagination, enthusiasm, and arabesqueness. It is the perfection of the commonplace, without sparkle or flash, but at the same time always interesting and agreeable. I could listen to him with pleasure for an hour or two every day, and I have no doubt I should thence grow wiser every day, for his brain is full, as hardly any man's ever was, and his way of delivering himself is easy and fluent.'

At Lady Stanley's Motley heard Thackeray deliver his lecture on George III., and was 'much impressed with the quiet graceful ease with which he read—just a few notes above the conversa-

tional level—but never rising to the declamatory. This light-in-hand manner suits well the delicate, hovering, rather than superficial style of the composition.' The lecture over:—

'Lady Airlie said to me, "Mrs. Norton wishes to make your acquaintance." I turned and bowed, and there she was, looking to-day almost as handsome as she has always been described as being. I know that you will like a sketch. She is rather above middle height. In her shawl and crinoline, of course I could not pronounce upon her figure. Her face is certainly extremely beautiful. The hair is raven black—violet black—without a thread of silver. The eyes very large, with dark lashes, and black as death; the nose straight; the mouth flexible and changing; with teeth which in themselves would make the fortune of an ordinary face—such is her physiognomy; and when you add to this extraordinary poetic genius, descent from that famous Sheridan who has made talent hereditary in his family, a low, sweet voice and a flattering manner, you can understand how she twisted men's heads off and hearts out, we will not be particular how many years ago.

'She said to me, as I made my bow on introduction, "Your name is upon every lip." I blushed and looked as much like a donkey as usual when such things are said. Then she added, "It is agreeable, is it not?" I then had grace enough to reply, "You ought to know if any one;" and then we talked of other things.'

There are frequent allusions to the youthful appearance of English matrons. 'England is the paradise of grandmothers.'

'There is no doubt that the English aristocracy has much beauty. When I say how handsome the women are, the reply is invariable—that is a great compliment from an American, for everybody knows that the American women are the handsomest in the world. On the whole I think that the grandmothers of England are the most miraculous race. There are the Duchess of Somerset, Lady Dufferin, and Mrs. Norton, then Lady Stanley, of whom I have spoken several times, the Marchioness of Londonderry, and various others, all exceedingly handsome women still. I can hardly remember the names of the many persons I was presented to. I remember one, a lively agreeable person, whose name was Lady Edward Thynne, a daughter of Mrs. Gore the novelist. She was apparently a young woman, and I daresay she is capable of having at this moment ten grandchildren for aught I know on the contrary.'

On the occasion of one of Mr. Motley's frequent visits to Cambridge House he describes Lord Palmerston, who

'talked with me a long time about English politics and American matters, saying nothing worth repeating, but conversing always with an easy, winning, quiet manner, which accounts for his great popularity among his friends. At the same time it seemed difficult to realise that he was the man who made almost every night, and a very late

late hour in the night, those rattling, vigorous, juvenile, slashing speeches which ring through the civilised world as soon as uttered. I told him that it seemed to me very difficult to comprehend how any man could make those ready impromptu harangues in answer always to things said in the course of the debate, taking up all the adversary's points in his target, and dealing blows in return, without hesitation or embarrassment. He said very quietly that it was all a matter of habit; and I suppose that he really does it with as much ease as he eats his breakfast.'

One of Motley's earliest friends was Lord Lyndhurst, whose own American origin led to many bonds of union with the Boston society, and when on his way to St. Petersburg in 1851, Motley passed through London, he brought with him a letter of introduction to the ex-Lord Chancellor. Dining at Lady Stanley's of Alderley one evening, he had the good fortune to meet the two great rivals, Lyndhurst and Brougham, together.

'Brougham is exactly like the pictures in 'Punch,' only 'Punch' flatters him. The common pictures of Palmerston and Lord John are not like at all to my mind, but Brougham is always hit exactly. His face, like his tongue and his mind, is shrewd, sharp, humorous. There certainly never was a great statesman and author who so irresistibly suggested the man who does the comic business at a small theatre. You are compelled to laugh when you see him as much as at Keeley or Warren. Yet there is absolutely nothing comic in his mind. But there is no resisting his nose. It is not merely the configuration of that wonderful feature which surprises you, but its mobility. It has the litheness and almost the length of the elephant's proboscis, and I have no doubt he can pick up pins or scratch his back with it as easily as he could take a pinch of snuff. He is always twisting it about in quite a fabulous manner.

'His hair is thick and snow-white and shiny; his head is large and knobby and bumpy, with all kinds of phrenological developments, which I did not have a chance fairly to study. The rugged outlines or headlands of his face are wild and bleak, but not forbidding. Deep furrows of age and thought and toil, perhaps of sorrow, run all over it, while his vast mouth, with a ripple of humour ever playing around it, expands like a placid bay under the huge promontory of his fantastic and incredible nose. His eye is dim and could never have been brilliant, but his voice is rather shrill with an unmistakeable northern intonation; his manner of speech is fluent, not garrulous, but obviously touched by time; his figure is tall, slender, shambling, awkward, but of course perfectly self-possessed. Such is what remains at eighty of the famous Henry Brougham.

'The company was too large for general conversation, but every now and then we at our end paused to listen to Brougham and Lyndhurst chaffing each other across the table. Lyndhurst said,

"Brougham, you disgraced the woolsack by appearing there with those plaid trousers, and with your peer's robe on one occasion put on over your chancellor's gown." "The devil," said Brougham, "you know that to be a calumny; I never wore the plaid trousers." "Well," said Lyndhurst, "he confesses the two gowns. Now the present Lord Chancellor never appears except in small clothes and silk stockings." Upon which Lady Stanley observed that the ladies in the gallery all admired Lord Chelmsford for his handsome leg. "A virtue that was never seen in you, Brougham," said Lyndhurst, and so on. I do not repeat these things because they are worth recording, but because I always try to Boswellize a little for your entertainment."

Space forbids us to continue these extracts. Our readers will find, on turning to the volumes themselves, that the passages we have quoted constitute but a very small portion of the vivid panorama of London society which is here presented to them. We would fain add to our selection the humorous description of the monotonous formality of London dinner parties, the portraits of Lord John Russell, 'the plain, quiet, smallish individual in green cutaway coat, large yellow waistcoat and plaid trousers'; of Hallam, who, crippled as he was, retained his intellectual powers unimpaired, 'a wreck, but he has not sunk head downwards as you sometimes see, which is the most melancholy termination of a voyage'; of the famous Lady Dufferin, looking as though she might be the sister of her own son; of that 'hearty, jolly companion' Monckton Milnes, 'the bird of Paradox,' 'who invited himself to meet me at Stirling's, eating up conscientiously nearly the whole of our breakfast, talking all the time'; of Danby Seymour, who in his eagerness to say a pleasant thing to the author of the 'History of the Dutch Republic,' assured him in 1858, that he had read that work eight years before; of Samuel Wilberforce, 'altogether too strenuous, too good and too bad for the feeble rôle of an Anglican Bishop: as a Cardinal in the days when Rome had power or as a prize-fighter in the great political ring he would have had scope for his energies'; of Mrs. Grote, 'despising crinoline and flounces, and attiring herself when going out for a walk in a shawl thrown over her shoulders and tied round her waist, with a poplin gown reaching to the tops of her boots, a tall, brown, man's hat with a feather in it, and a stout walking-stick'; of Dean Milman and Sir Roderick Murchison; of Hayward and Disraeli; of the late Duke of Wellington, Professor Owen, and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe; but for all these and a host of others we can only refer our readers to the letters.

The London season over, Mr. Motley, before rejoining his family,



family, returned to Holland to resume his labours among the archives, and his visits to the scenes made memorable by the events he was recording, but the impossibility of scaring up another ghost like William the Silent in the second portion of his work sorely oppressed him; he was despondent about the result, and found that the strain on his mind, his time, and his resources was greater than he had anticipated. During his month's residence at the Hague, in August, he made the acquaintance of the King and Queen of Holland, who not only showed their cordial appreciation of the services he had rendered to their country, but paid him marked attention both on this and on many subsequent occasions.

The winter of 1858 and the following spring were passed in Rome, but the intention of proceeding to Venice, for the collection of much important material for the history, was frustrated by the outbreak of the war of Italian Independence.

Motley was thus by stress of circumstances, rather than by choice, driven to a second residence in England, which we have the less cause to regret, in that it has yielded us a series of pictures of English and Scottish country life corresponding to those of London society which we have already noticed.

At the close of 1860, the first two volumes of the 'History of the United Netherlands' were published, but the future progress of the work was about to be interrupted by events, which, although not unforeseen, were destined to assume such magnitude as the wisest had not anticipated, and which were to constitute a crisis not only in Motley's life but in the world's history.

The most ardent of Republicans, Motley had for months past been looking forward with the deepest anxiety to the result of the Presidential Election. 'With regard to my views and aspirations,' he wrote in March, 1860, 'I can only say that if Seward is not elected (provided he be the candidate) this autumn, good-night, my native land!' Seward, as is well known, was after a close contest beaten for the Republican Nomination, and when the news of Abraham Lincoln's election reached Motley in London, he wrote to his mother:—

'Although I have felt little doubt as to the result for months past, yet as I was so intensely anxious for the success of the Republican cause, I was on tenterhooks till I actually knew the result. I rejoice in the triumph at last of freedom over slavery more than I can express. Thank God, it can no longer be said, after the great verdict just pronounced, that the common law of my country is slavery, and that the American flag carries slavery with it wherever it goes!' . . .

At this moment war was discussed only as a possible contingency, but before the new President could actually enter upon his office those four fatal months must elapse, in which the weakness and vacillation of Buchanan and the corruption of his cabinet were to accelerate so much the march of events; even in Lincoln's inaugural address war was not regarded as inevitable, but before he had been a month at the White House the first shot at Fort Sumter had ushered in that struggle which is only now beginning to assume its true historical perspective.

To enter into any discussion of the American Civil War, save in so far as may be necessary in dealing with the subsequent years of Mr. Motley's life, would be out of place on the present occasion. For the time all else is banished from his mind; when eight years previously 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' was moving the heart of Europe against slavery, Motley had written, 'The only way the curse is ever to be taken from the nation is by creating such an atmosphere, all round the Slave States, that a slaveholder may not be able to thrust his nose outside his own door without scenting that the rankness of his offence is tainting every wind of heaven.'

'But here in Europe nobody knows anything about the matter, saving only that slavery exists. They have no idea that America is a confederation of States, each of which States is competent to establish and abolish slavery at its pleasure, and that the general government has no power to do one or the other. I believe everybody in Europe thinks, so far as he thinks at all, most of them contenting themselves with bragging, that the President of the United States could abolish slavery to-morrow by an edict, just as the Emperor of the French abolished the Republic by half a dozen lines of proclamation.'

The President, in his inaugural address, said, 'I have no purpose directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it now exists; I believe that I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so.'

In Motley's mind the matter is perfectly simple, and he can brook no wavering or weighing of arguments in others: no matter that the main question was confused by a score of side issues; that, even in the Northern States, there were men who took a different view; that, by his own admission, great ignorance prevailed in Europe concerning American politics and institutions.\* He had no patience with any one who disagreed

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\* In a recently published American work we read, 'Miss Martineau, who had been received with open arms in Boston, was socially ostracized by the same society as soon as she was known to be in pronounced sympathy with the anti-slavery party.'—'Men and Manners of half a Century.' By Hugh McCulloch.

with him ; he cannot bear to think that the South should have any well-wishers in England ; for him, throughout the war there seems scarce any pity for Southerners even in their sorest straits ; for him Lee and Davis, the general and the statesman, seem entirely lost in Lee and Davis the rebels.

The Liberal Government in England had recognized the South as a belligerent power ; this step was taken in no spirit of hostility to the North, but it raised a storm of resentment among the Federals as being a form of moral support, which, apart from any material aid, might suffice to turn the scale. Motley was torn asunder, by his growing affection for England and the English on one hand, and his passionate devotion to his native land and her cause on the other. Among leading English statesmen there were many who shared his views, but the popular voice, and there was reason to believe even the Government, inclined to the other side.

His first act was, by means of two very able letters to the 'Times,' to endeavour to guide popular opinion in England ; his next to proceed to America, where on his arrival, he

'told Lord Lyons in Washington that I had appointed myself a peace commissioner between the two countries, and meant to discharge my duties to the fullest extent, and in that vein I had spoken to the President, to Seward, Chase, Blair, and Bates, and to every other personage, private or public, with whom I came in contact. Of course I only said this in jest—for I have no idea of exaggerating my humble individuality—but he was kind enough to say that he thought I might do much good.'

We catch in the letters which Motley wrote to his wife in England, during this short visit to America, echoes of the intensity of feeling which prevailed in Boston, and of the enthusiasm which was rapidly welding the North into a 'unit' in opposition to 'an outrageous and unprovoked insurrection against a constituted Government.' 'The most warm-hearted England-loving men in this England-loving part of the country are full of sorrow at the attitude taken up by England.'

Regiments were being formed and hurried to the front, and there was scarce a family of his acquaintance but had sent at least one member to do battle for the Union.

From Washington, whither Motley went in the prosecution of his task as mediator between England and America, he sent accounts of Scott and McDowell, McClellan and Butler, Chase and Seward, Sumner and Blair, and of Lincoln—'a man who looks younger than his pictures, and on the whole, except for his height, which is two or three inches above six feet, one who would not be remarked in any way as well, or ill-looking.'

Whatever

Whatever the success which attended or might have attended Motley's efforts, they were not destined to be prolonged; he was at this juncture called upon to serve his country in a different capacity and a distant land, and we must pass from the turmoil and enthusiasm, the hopes and fears, the forecasts of events, and the estimates of characters attendant upon the commencement of hostilities, to follow him in his new capacity of United States Minister at the Court of Austria. How many of those forecasts and estimates were to be falsified and disappointed, readers of history must judge.

How great was the change to a man of Motley's impulsive nature may easily be imagined. A few weeks before his appointment he had written, 'as to going abroad and immersing myself again in the sixteenth century, it is simply an impossibility. I can think of nothing but American affairs, and should be ashamed if it were otherwise,' but duty compelled him to go, and he did not return to his native land until the war in which his whole soul was absorbed was ended. This enforced absence, however, did not diminish his zeal for the great cause in which he was enlisted, and we see how eagerly he was carrying on his advocacy of that cause in spite of what he calls his exile.

Describing his first experiences at Vienna to Dr. O. W. Holmes, he writes:—

'What can I say to you of Cis-Atlantic things? I am almost ashamed to be away from home. You know that I decided to remain, and had sent for my family to come to America, when my present appointment altered my plans. I do what good I can. I think I made some impression on Lord John Russell, with whom I spent two days soon after my arrival in England; and I talked very frankly, and as strongly as I could, to Lord Palmerston; and I had long conversations and correspondences with other leading men in England. I also had an hour's talk with Thouvenel in Paris, and hammered the Northern view into him as soundly as I could. For this year there will be no foreign interference with us, and I do not anticipate it at any time, unless we bring it on ourselves by bad management, which I do not expect. Our fate is in our own hands, and Europe is looking on to see which side is the strongest. When it has made the discovery, it will back it as also the best and the most moral. Yesterday I had my audience with the Emperor. He received me with much cordiality, and seemed interested in a long account which I gave him of our affairs. You may suppose I inculcated the Northern views. We spoke in his vernacular, and he asked me afterwards if I was a German. I mention this not from vanity, but because he asked it with earnestness and as if it had a political significance. Of course, I undeceived him. His appearance interested me and his manner is very pleasing.'

Through

Through all this time of storm and stress, it is gratifying to find how unwavering was his affection for England: when the Trent affair had strained the relations between the two countries almost to breaking-point, he writes to his mother, 'I do not enter into the law or the history, I simply feel that if a war is to take place *now* between England and America, I shall be in danger of losing my reason:' to Lady William Russell he writes, 'Alas! for perfidious Albion. Felix Austria makes me no amends for her loss: I might live here for the rest of the century and never take root, while I am still bleeding from my eternal extirpation from your hostile but congenial soil.' He is never tired of comparing English society where all that is distinguished in art, literature, and science meets on equal terms with the highest ranks of the aristocracy, and that of Vienna, where 'you must be intimate with the Pharaohs or stay at home,' and 'if an Austrian should be Shakespeare, Galileo, Nelson, and Raphael, all in one, he could not be admitted into good society unless he had the sixteen quarterings of nobility which birth alone could give him.' By a curious regulation he was, in virtue of his official position, forbidden access to the Vienna archives, and thus cut off even from his friends of the sixteenth century.

This very dearth of intellectual companionship, combined with his craving for personal sympathy and fresh news, drove Motley back on his correspondents, and enhances the interest of the letters at this period.

He discusses every turn of events and principle of politics, not only with his friends O. W. Holmes and J. R. Lowell, but with such Englishmen as John Bright and John Stuart Mill, whose mature views on the question are very instructive, though it is not a little strange, considering the circumstances in which he wrote, to find Mr. Bright using such a two-edged argument against his own country and on behalf of America as that

'the rich, made rich by commerce, are generally very corrupt—the fluctuations of politics suddenly influence their fortunes, and they are more likely to take the wrong side than the right one. Thus, in London, Liverpool, and Manchester, on the Stock Exchange and the commercial exchanges, are found many friends of the South, from the stupid idea that, if the North would not resist, peace would of necessity be restored.'

And so, down to the eventful month of April, 1865, which brought to the North the climax of 'National joy and national bereavement,' Motley continued to watch intensely for every fragment of personal as well as public news from across the Atlantic;

Atlantic; for every symptom of increasing sympathy among his personal friends in England, or in the nation at large: the keenness of his partizanship seemed even to increase, for he finds fault with his friend O. W. Holmes for being 'far too complimentary to the slaveholders,' and is enthusiastic in his admiration of Lowell's 'Yankee Idyll.' 'Was there ever anything more stinging, more concentrated, more vigorous, more just?' The Comte de Paris, whose acquaintance he makes, wins his affection and admiration at once by his espousal of the Federal cause. He extols 'the extraordinary genius of Grant,' whom he considers 'at least equal to any general now living in any part of the world;' and, when the news of his father's death reached him in 1864, amid his deep regrets that he should have been deprived of the privilege of being with him at the last, he expresses the 'sincere pain, at times almost distress, that I could find no sympathy with him in my political sentiments,' a pain so great that for some time he had been compelled to carry on his home correspondence with his mother alone.

It must not, however, be supposed that the correspondence of this period is confined to American topics; they form, it is true, the undercurrent of all his thoughts, but Vienna and its customs, its salons and celebrities, are fully described, as well as summer tours in Austria and Italy, and many other diverse matters.

During the negotiations about the partition of Schleswig-Holstein, Bismarck visited Vienna, and dined on more than one occasion with his old college friend, to whom he had written a few months previously.

'You have given me a great pleasure with your letter of the 9th, and I shall be very grateful to you if you keep your promise to write oftener and longer. I hate politics, but, as you say truly, like the grocer hating figs, I am none the less obliged to keep my thoughts increasingly occupied with those figs. Even at this moment while I am writing to you my ears are full of it. I am obliged to listen to particularly tasteless speeches out of the mouths of uncommonly childish and excited politicians, and I have therefore a moment of unwilling leisure which I cannot use better than in giving you news of my welfare. I never thought that in my riper years I should be obliged to carry on such an unworthy trade as that of a parliamentary Minister. As Envoy, although an official, I still had the feeling of being a gentleman; as (parliamentary) Minister one is a helot. I have come down in the world, and hardly know how.

'*April 18th.*—I wrote as far as this yesterday, then the sitting came to an end; five hours' Chamber until three o'clock; one hour's report to His Majesty, three hours at an incredibly dull dinner, old important Whigs, then two hours' work; finally, a supper with a  
colleague,

colleague, who would have been hurt if I had slighted his fish. This morning, I had hardly breakfasted, before Karolyi was sitting opposite to me; he was followed without interruption by Denmark, England, Portugal, Russia, France, whose Ambassador I was obliged to remind at one o'clock that it was time for me to go to the House of phrases. I am sitting again in the latter; hear people talk nonsense, and end my letter. All these people have agreed to approve our treaties with Belgium, in spite of which twenty speakers scold each other with the greatest vehemence, as if each wished to make an end of the other; they are not agreed about the motives which make them unanimous, hence, alas! a regular German squabble about the Emperor's beard; *querelle d'Allemand*. You Anglo-Saxon Yankees have something of the same kind also. Do you all know exactly why you are waging such furious war with each other? All certainly do not know, but they kill each other *con amore*, that's the way the business comes to them. Your battles are bloody; ours wordy; these chatterers really cannot govern Prussia. I must bring some opposition to bear against them; they have too little wit and too much self-complacency—stupid and audacious. Stupid, in all its meanings, is not the right word; considered individually, these people are sometimes very clever, generally educated—the regulation German University culture; but of politics, beyond the interests of their own church tower, they know as little as we knew as students, and even less; as far as external politics go, they are also, taken separately, like children. In all other questions they become childish as soon as they stand together *in corpore*. In the mass stupid, individually intelligent. . . .

'Now, an affectionate farewell. I can't go on writing such an unorthographic language as English so late at night, but please try it yourself soon again. Your handwriting is like crow's feet, but is very legible. Is mine the same?

'Your faithful old friend, V. BISMARCK.'

In 1864 occurred the most important diplomatic negotiation which Motley was officially called upon to conduct. At the instigation of Louis Napoleon—'the Prince of Darkness, who, for the time being, has thought proper to assume the appearance of a Sovereign of France, and to inhabit the Tuileries'—the Archduke Maximilian had been elected Emperor of Mexico: Maximilian applied to his brother, the Emperor of Austria, for help, and a body of volunteers was on the point of sailing from Trieste, when the threat of the immediate recal of the United States Minister led to the abandonment of the enterprise.

Meanwhile the 'atmosphere of *Schleswig-Holsteinismus*, which is as good as a London fog, pervaded Europe': 'the old Bund was moribund'; Prussia and Austria, having combined to crush Denmark, were quarrelling over the spoils, and events were drawing onward apace to the crisis which ended in the 'most lightning-like



lightning-like campaign in all military history.' These events Motley could regard as a dispassionate spectator, while his historical training and his official position combine to give his narratives and summaries of what was passing around him a peculiar value and interest.

But his career at Vienna was drawing to a close: the events which led to his resignation are fully narrated in Dr. Holmes's Memoir, and for our present purpose it is only necessary to give a brief summary of them, for they are not dealt with in the Correspondence.

It appears then that in 1866 a letter was addressed to Mr. Seward, Secretary of State under President Johnson, signed George W. McCracken—or McCrackin—and containing sweeping and abusive accusations against several United States Ministers abroad, amongst them of Mr. Motley, as being 'a thorough flunky,' 'an un-American official,' and so forth. Whether such an individual as George W. McCracken ever existed is doubtful, at any rate he was unknown either to Motley or Seward. It might be supposed that such a communication would have been consigned to the waste-paper basket without further ado, but Mr. Seward saw fit to send to the accused a formal statement of the charge, and a request for an explanation. We who have experienced the extreme punctiliousness of the United States Government in matters connected with the functions of an Ambassador may be led to draw a comparison between the occurrences of 1867 and 1888. To Motley's high-bred sensitive nature this communication was a cruel blow, and he instantly sent in his resignation. That it was accepted was due, not to Mr. Seward, but to the President.

In March, 1867, Motley writes to O. W. Holmes:—

'It is a fall from a steep precipice after speaking of your romance to allude to a late correspondence in the newspapers. But as you say so many kind things in your last letter, and as so many friends and so many strangers have said so much that is gratifying to me in public and private on this very painful subject, it would be like affectation in writing to so old a friend as you not to touch upon it. I shall confine myself, however, to one fact, which, so far as I know, may be new to you. George W. McCracken is a man and a name utterly unknown to me. With the necessary qualification which every man who values truth must make when asserting such a negative, viz., to the very best of my memory and belief, I never set eyes on him nor heard of him until now, in the whole course of my life. Not a member of my family or of the legation has the faintest recollection of any such person. I am quite convinced that he never saw me nor heard the sound of my voice. That his letter was a  
tissue

tissue of vile calumnies, shameless fabrications, and unblushing and contemptible falsehoods, by whomsoever uttered, I have stated in a reply to what ought never to have been an official letter. No man can regret more than I do that such a correspondence is enrolled in the Capitol among American State Papers. I shall not trust myself to speak of the matter. It has been a sufficiently public scandal. My letter—published by the Senate—has not yet been answered by the Secretary of State. At least I have not yet received any reply.'

Meanwhile the two concluding volumes of the 'United Netherlands' were ready for the printer, and Motley returned to England to see them through the press, during which time he gives us a fresh series of sketches of English life and society, but we cannot pause to give any further extracts.

In 1868, he proceeded to America and supported General Grant's candidature for the Presidency; in 1869, he was appointed, by the President and Mr. Sumner, United States Minister to England, on the recal of Mr. Reverdy Johnson. The selection appeared to be a singularly good one, though Motley accepted the post with diffidence and misgivings.

'I feel anything but exaltation at present, rather the opposite sensation. I feel that I am placed higher than I deserve, and at the same time that I am taking greater responsibilities than ever were assumed by me before. *You* will be indulgent for my mistakes and shortcomings, but who can expect to avoid them? But the world will be cruel and the times are threatening. I shall do my best, but the best may be poor enough, and keep a "heart for any fate." Pardon my brevity, but I have no time to do half what I have to do.'

His reception in England was most cordial and gratifying, but his tenure of the office was destined to be all too brief; once more a frivolous—to apply no more sinister epithet—pretext was seized upon by his own countrymen to oust him from it; to Englishmen it must always be a cause of congratulation that a name so honoured among all classes, so beloved among those who knew him, should be enrolled in that distinguished body of envoys who have done so much to render America and her sons popular in England.

The burning question which had led to Mr. R. Johnson's recal was the Alabama claims. Immediately on his arrival Motley had an interview with Lord Clarendon, to whom he submitted the draft of his report thereon before sending it to Washington. Some words supposed to have been used in the conversation, and the submission of the draft, seem to have called forth some slight criticism, but the matter appeared to be of no serious import and to have been closed amicably until July, 1870, when Motley having been summarily called upon

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to resign on the ground of this incident, and having declined to do so, was dismissed.

The cause assigned by Dr. Holmes for this strange decision is that, in the interval, a personal quarrel had occurred between Grant and Sumner over the San Domingo Treaty, and that Grant was aiming a blow at his adversary in the recal of one who was known to be that adversary's personal friend; and to this supposition Motley alludes in his defence. Meanwhile Sumner had been succeeded by Mr. Hamilton Fish, and the reply to Motley's defence 'was so objectionable in its tone and expressions,' writes Dr. Holmes, 'that it has been generally doubted whether the paper could claim anything more of the secretary's hand than his signature.'

'I truly believe,' writes Motley, 'that I found myself exactly at the moment when I was expelled from my post in a position in which I could do much good. I thought myself entirely in the confidence and the friendship of the leading personages in England. And I know that I could have done as well as any man to avert war or even animosity between two great nations, and at the same time guard the honour and interests of our nation. Farewell, write to me soon if you are to send an occasional message to one who now plunges into obscurity for ever and without personal regret.'

Thus for a second time, and finally, was an abrupt termination put to Motley's official life. The few years of health and strength which remained to him were to be devoted to the prosecution of his historical labours, and, with the exception of a few months, were to be passed in England, 'the land which we love so much'; the man whose whole mind and body had for years been at the disposal of his country in the crisis of her fate, could now say, 'events at home fill me with disgust unfathomable.' The death of his beloved mother in 1865 had severed one of the closest ties which bound him to America, while the marriages of his daughters in England had been a further inducement to him to settle on this side of the Atlantic.

In 1871, he spent some months in study at the Hague, where he renewed his acquaintance with the Queen of the Netherlands—than whom 'I have rarely known a more intellectual and accomplished lady or a sincerer friend.' It was no small gratification to him to find how widely his history was appreciated in Holland.

'I like to tell so old and indulgent a friend as you,' he writes to Holmes, 'that my efforts to illustrate the very heroic history of this country have been appreciated here, and that the books in the translation have gone through many editions. They are used in the higher schools also. ¶ I should have been sorry not to be known in the  
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the country to whose past I have devoted so much of my life. But we have been most warmly welcomed from highest to lowest, and I feel very grateful. I will say no more, and I blush to have said so much.'

On quitting Holland he took a few weeks' tour in Germany to revisit old haunts, and 'to patch up my health, which is somewhat broken . . . after being bowled out in so brutal a manner from a place where I did my duty as faithfully as ever man did.'

But though the 'disgust of the inkstand,' as he calls it, was creeping over him, his interest in his work was revived by the discovery of a fresh hero.

'I live much among the dead men, and have been solacing myself for several months in reading a considerable correspondence of John van Oldenbarneveld, who had the ill luck to be decapitated, as you remember, two centuries and a half ago. If they had cut his head off on account of his abominable handwriting, no creature would have murmured at the decree who ever tried to read his infinite mass of manuscripts. I take some credit to myself for having, after much time and trouble, enabled myself to decipher the most of them. It is a system of hieroglyphics such as I have not before encountered, and I have had some experience in the cacography of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

'I am afraid that I write history now rather from the bad habit of years, and because one must have a file to gnaw at, than from any hope of doing much good. The desire to attempt the justification of the eminent and most fearfully injured Barneveld inspires me, but I cannot help thinking, so far as my own small personality is concerned, that the public has had enough of me, and will hardly absorb another book of mine. Moreover, I have at last the consciousness of being doubled up. I have suddenly fallen into old age as into a pit. And I hate it. I try to imagine that it has much to do with the climate and the marshy exhalations of a soil below the level of the sea, this sudden failing of intellectual and bodily vigour, languor, lassitude, moorditch melancholy.'

In 1872, he paid a visit to Prince Bismarck, at Varzin, and his accounts of the daily life and domestic circle of the Great Chancellor make us long for fuller details of that unrestrained intercourse, which the two old friends held with each other.

'He told innumerable anecdotes about that great battle, and subsequently gave some most curious and interesting details about the negotiations of Nikolsburg. I wish that you could have heard him. You know his way. He is the least of a *poseur* of any man I ever saw, little or big. Everything comes out so offhand and carelessly; but I wish there could be an invisible, self-registering Boswell always attached to his button-hole, so that his talk could be perpetuated. There

There were a good many things said by him about the Nikolsburg Conference confirming what I had always understood.

'The military opinion was bent on going to Vienna after Sadowa. Bismarck strongly opposed this idea. He said it was absolutely necessary not to humiliate Austria, to do nothing that would make friendly relations with her in the future impossible. He said many people refused to speak to him. The events have entirely justified Bismarck's course, as all now agree. It would have been easy enough to go to Vienna or to Hungary, but to return would have been full of danger. I asked him if he was good friends with the Emperor of Austria now. He said Yes, that the Emperor was exceedingly civil to him last year at Salzburg, and crossed the room to speak to him as soon as he appeared at the door. He said he used when younger to think himself a clever fellow enough, but now he was convinced that nobody had any control over events—that nobody was really powerful or great, and it made him laugh when he heard himself complimented as wise, foreseeing, and exercising great influence over the world. A man in the situation in which he had been placed was obliged, while outsiders for example were speculating whether to-morrow it would be rain or sunshine, to decide promptly, it will rain, or it will be fine, and to act accordingly with all the forces at his command. If he guessed right, all the world said, What sagacity—what prophetic power! if wrong, all the old women would have beaten me with broomsticks.

'If he had learned nothing else, he said he had learned modesty. Certainly a more unaffected mortal never breathed, nor a more genial one. He looks like a Colossus, but his health is somewhat shattered. He can never sleep until four or five in the morning. Of course work follows him here, but as far as I have yet seen it seems to trouble him but little. He looks like a country gentleman entirely at leisure.

'He talks away right and left about anything and everything—says among other things that nothing could be a greater *bêtise* than for Germany to attack any foreign country—that if Russia were to offer the Baltic provinces as a gift, he would not accept them. As to Holland, it would be mere insanity to pretend to occupy or invade its independence. It had never occurred to him or to anybody. As to Belgium, France would have made any terms at any time with Germany if allowed to take Belgium. I wish I could record the description he gave of his interviews with Jules Favre and afterwards with Thiers and Favre, when the peace was made.

'One trait I mustn't forget, however. Favre cried a little, or affected to cry, and was very pathetic and heroic. Bismarck said that he must not harangue him as if he were an assembly; they were two together on business purposes, and he was perfectly hardened against eloquence of any kind. Favre begged him not to mention that he had been so weak as to weep, and Bismarck was much diverted at finding in the printed account afterwards published by Favre that he made a great parade of the tears he had shed.'

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At length, in 1874, was given to the world the last instalment of that great work which Motley had set himself, but which he never lived to complete, for the rude shocks which he had sustained in recent years had told severely on his health, and the end was rapidly drawing near. In the winter of 1873, he had been sent to Bournemouth, but without deriving much benefit from the change, though, on returning to London in June, he so far rallied as to be able to write, 'It is extraordinary how well I feel here,' but the improvement was but of short duration. In the spring he wrote to Dr. Holmes, 'I am physically a bankrupt, and, as months roll on, fear that this is my fate for what remains of life.' Moreover, Mrs. Motley's health had for some time past been a cause of grave anxiety, and on the last day of 1874, she who had been his stay and support in all his labours and troubles, was taken away from him.

There remains but little to tell. Tended by the loving care of his daughters and cheered by the companionship of his grandchildren, he was, in spite of failing health and strength, able to enjoy the society of his friends, and to pay a few visits, till on the 29th of May, 1877, he suddenly passed away at Kingston Russell, the seat of the Sheridans, to whom he was connected by the marriage of his daughter to the nephew of his old friend Mrs. Norton.

We have in the foregoing pages dwelt more than once on Motley's prejudices, and on the strength with which those prejudices were expressed; and this marked trait of his character brings out into all the stronger relief the gentleness, which in these latter years of his life is markedly apparent in all his letters. Within a few weeks of his death, he wrote to his eldest daughter:—

'I am a good deal puzzled by English party politics, and in my own ignorance now should be the more ready to forgive (if I had not long since done so) the gross ignorance and hatred manifested from 1861 to 1864 by many parliamentary chiefs in regard to America.'

In estimating a man's character there is nothing more misleading than his own selected and edited letters, though as throwing a light on independent materials, or as illustrating facts and transactions which are known from other sources, they are invaluable. Apart from any study of Motley's character, his letters are of exceptional interest for the brilliant comments they contain on subjects which appeal to every educated reader, nor, we believe, is it possible for any one to rise from the perusal of them without that feeling of personal intimacy with, and of personal affection for, the writer which constitutes

one of the greatest charms of good memoirs and biographies, but as a means of arriving at a just and true estimate of character the chief value of this collection lies, perhaps, in the letters addressed to Motley. When we consider the variety of his correspondents and their individual high positions and intellectual celebrity, as well as the tone of confidence and ease which pervades their communications, it is impossible to escape the conviction, that they could only have been addressed to a man of remarkable qualities both of heart and head.

That as a public man he was not popular among certain classes in his own country is admitted by his biographer. Democracies, as Sir Henry Maine, amongst others, has proved, are slow to discern individual worth, and Motley 'did not illustrate the type of popular politician. He was too high-minded, too scholarly, too generously industrious, too polished, too much at home in the highest European circles, too much courted for his personal fascinations, too remote from the trading world of caucus managers.'

The mere fact of his being a Massachusetts man had raised, in some quarters, strong opposition to his appointment to Vienna; the same cause had exercised a bitter influence in the McCracken accusations. His position in European societies had caused the stigma of aristocracy to be attached to him, a stigma which extreme Republicans are slow to forgive.

It was a strange irony of fate that the man, in whom the love of democratic institutions amounted to a passion, the man in whose eyes a monarch was, if not necessarily a monster like Philip II., yet unworthy of confidence; who can scarce see anything to praise in the efforts of England under Elizabeth and James I. in that cause of European freedom, the credit of supporting which he would assign almost entirely to democratic Holland, that this man should have been assailed as an aristocrat; but so it was: the experience must have been a bitter one, but when the first pang of anger and mortification had passed away, it seems to have been succeeded by a feeling of manly humility and resignation.

'Do not believe me inclined to complain, or to pass what remains of life in feeble lamentations. When I think of all the blessings I have had, and of the measure of this world's goods infinitely beyond my deservings that have been heaped upon me, I should despise myself if I should not find strength enough to bear the sorrows which the Omnipotent has now chosen to send.'

Motley was, in short, one of those few beings, to whom we are tempted to apply that often misused phrase—a thorough gentleman.

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